





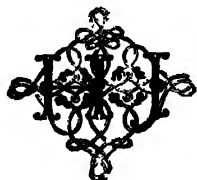


# CHRIST AT CARNIVAL



# CHRIST AT CARNIVAL

AND OTHER POEMS  
BY MURIEL STUART



HERBERT JENKINS LIMITED  
ARUNDEL PLACE HAYMARKET  
LONDON S.W. 8 8 MCMXVI

THE ANCHOR PRESS, LTD., TIPTREE, ~~ENGL.~~

TO  
MY MOTHER

Thou who hast loved and striven  
So much, so many times,  
Given me and forgiven,  
Take this poor wreath of rhymes.





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## CHRIST AT CARNIVAL



## CHRIST AT CARNIVAL

THE hand of Carnival was at my door,  
I listened to its knocking, and sped down :  
Faith was forgotten, Duty led no more :  
I heard a wanton revelry in the town ;  
The Carnival ran in my veins like fire !  
And some unfrustrable desire  
Goaded me on to catch the roses thrown  
From breast to breast, and with my own  
Fugitive kiss to snatch the fugitive kiss ;  
I broke all faith for this  
One wild and worthless hour,  
To dance, to run, to beckon, as a flower  
Maddens the bee with half-surrendering,  
Then flies back in the air with petals shut.

Fainting with laughter and pursuit

I heard shrill winds leap out and sink again,

Tracking the green bed where the Spring hath  
lain,

And vanished from, whose feet made audible  
Music among the tall trees on the hill.

Above me leaned a nightingale

Burdened and big with song, whose throat let  
fall

Long notes, so poignant and so musical,

I deemed his young mate, listening,

Heard him less passionately sing

Than I a-foot to Carnival !

Above the town, swart Night came rolling in  
Upon her couch of heliotrope :

A new Moon, young and thin,

Lay like a Columbine

Teasing the spent hill, her old Harlequin,

She, who of late waned on the bitter sky,  
Furtive and old, a woman without hope,  
Begging in long-familiar streets, where Sin  
Once seeking her, now shuddered and went by.  
Caught in the meshes of a merry throng,  
I stumbled through the lighted Market Place ;  
The lanterns swung an undetermined rose  
In Night's convulsive face  
As we were swept along  
In crazy dance and song,—  
On through the mirth-mad alleys of the town,  
With shrill loud laughter tumbled roughly  
down,  
Whirled up in swift embrace.  
All, all went swinging, swaying in the revel.  
Laughing and reeling, kissing each and all—  
A crowd that wildest jesting did dishevel—  
O mad night of Carnival !



Racing along the last mean street that goes  
From house to house to find the mountain track,  
I loosed their hands to catch a rose  
Flung from some casement; swiftly they  
turned back  
With gurdy laughter their wild mates to greet,  
Swift as the footless wind along the wheat!  
Fainter and fainter grew their revelling,  
Deserted of a sudden, lay the street,  
Silence fell on me like a famished thing,  
Making my soul aware of one who stood  
Beside me—one who wore a monkish hood.  
I stared, as one who sees  
Beneath the thin and settled sheet  
Over still mysteries,  
Faint outline of beloved hands and feet,  
Too little loved and now too dead to care,  
And suddenly becomes aware

That more than Death lies<sup>'</sup> there,  
That from this piteous and submissive change  
Something has risen, terrible and strange.

Why fell my roses ?      <sup>\*</sup>What fear drove me, then,  
To question him : " Who art thou, Citizen ?  
Fainter and fainter grows the Carnival.

Wilt thou lock hands and turn with me again ? "

He answered not, but let the hood half-fall,  
Showing a thorn-plait on a forehead marred ;  
Trembling I cried : " Who art thou, Lord ? "

" As thou sayest, I am He !

How long upon My cross am I to bleed  
For thee still to deny Me utterly ?

Is not the hour yet come that I be freed,  
How long am I to listen at thy door ? "

Stricken in soul, I fell against His feet,  
In rose-disordered street,

Weeping : " I have not heard Thy foot before."

He answered : " He who hears

Loud noise of Carnival about his ears,

How shall he heed the foot with silence shod,

Or listen for the small still voice of God ?

What is thy life ?

Is thy sword stained in any splendid strife ?

Hast thou, in all thy safe, unshaken years,

Once thrown thyself upon Night's ambushed  
spears,

Or broken with thy tears

Thy heart against the Dawn's feet any day ?

Hast thou spurned

Any earthly perishable sweet thing

To bear another's burden ? Hast thou learned

At any knee but Folly's, trafficking

With every swift delight that said thee ' yea ' ?

Oft hast thou goaded men to kiss thy mouth,

The flower of thy youth

Thou hast rendered up to any wind that's fleet,

But hast thou ever hastened to the Cross

To kiss My saving feet ? "

" Thou knowest, Lord, thou knowest, I have  
not striven,

I made life easy, profitable, sweet,

I have not loved much or been much forgiven ;

Of all a woman's vows the holiest—

To children that were posies at my breast—

I have forsworn, to-night, forsaking all

The ways of God to dance at Carnival.

What have I now to offer Thee Who deignest

To seek for grape on such unfruitful vine ;

Who with such sinful head Thy bosom  
stainest ! "

He said : " The last allegiance will be Mine,

Leave all and follow Me."

“ Nay, but my little children sleep at home  
Beside their father, I would say good-bye.”  
He answered : “ Was there any time for Me  
To make My farewells in Gethsemane,  
Or any lips to take last kisses from ?  
Knowest thou not that I can satisfy  
All creatures I make Mine, shall I not be  
Thy priest, blessing for thee the common bread,  
Till the white flesh divine  
Quicken against thy lip, and hallowèd,  
The blood beat through the wine ?  
I would have all thou hast,  
Be all thou art,  
I would claim all thy present, future, past,  
For My despisèd heart ;  
For Me thou shalt all other creatures hate  
My seven wounds thou shalt assuage  
With mouth inviolate.”

" O pardoning love," I wept, " O love divine,  
That such as Thou shouldst ask of such !—  
I am Thine, all Thine,  
Casting here at Thy feet, despised Thou,  
All other loves that used to mean so much,  
All other hopes that mean so little now "

From a side-alley dumb to revelry,  
Came the low sound of weeping, then my name :  
A beggar came  
Out of the heaving dark and spake to me ·  
" How knowest thou Christ ? " I answered ·  
    " By the thorn " ;  
" Nay, but the thorn tree grows in every wood  
For any brow forsworn ! " ·  
The other whispered : " Thou art tempted here  
For my sake," but the beggar's voice came fleet  
As pain : " Three crosses did that hillside bear,

Not Christ alone hath wounded hands and feet ;

Dost thou believe

That every pierced hand stretched to thee is  
Christ ?

Shall not some thief impenitent deceive,

At some strange shrine wilt thou be sacrificed ?”

The other whispered : “ Shall thy faith be led

So soon a traitor, child ? For such as he

Trample Me every day.” The beggar said :

“ Nay, wast thou spit upon in Galilee ? ”

Wildly I cried : “ Oh, from this hallowed street

Go thy way, beggar, take thine apostate feet

From this poor temple on whose pinnacle

Christ in His Love doth not disdain to dwell,

Who doth confer

Glory on things inglorious, nor doth shun,

But bids an angel to Him minister,

Albeit a fallen one ;

And if thou canst not pray,

Leave me my prayer at least and go thy  
way ! ”

Swift were Christ's feet the mountain road  
along ;

As swift as they my soul beside them fled,  
Keeping fleet measure to the strong  
Unshatterable music of His words,  
That in my hard heart made  
Exquisite wounds that sang the while they bled,  
Like little tamèd birds ;

“ O Holy One, I break here at Thy feet  
The perfume of my soul like Magdalen's sweet  
Spilled ointment ; knewest Thou who gatherèd  
Those holy spices ? What dishevelled night,  
What lust, profaning every temple-rite  
To toss the <sup>\*</sup>gold of her sweet shameless head,  
Had eased from priestly hands the spikenard



That made her soiled garments smell of God ?  
Thou didst accept that sweetness when she  
    kneeled,—

That holy myrrh spilled from the soul and  
    shard !

Nor didst disdain by her to be unshod,  
Nay, Thy world-wounded feet her tresses  
    healed.

“ So here I gather sweets of all my life,  
Treasure for which sin waged unworthy  
    strife,

Holding as one who guilty pleasure wins—  
Yea, even all my sins, my little sins—  
My loves and penitences, foes no more  
At strife with Thee for me. Oh, bid me pour  
My spirit's perfume ! I have wept and kissed  
Those feet grown weary following what men  
Caught up so easily ; upon this brow

Be shed the glory of Love's pardon now,  
As once the tresses of a Magdalen  
Became an aureole at the feet of Christ ! "

Only the silence shook as we went on ;  
Soon the last watching window-light was gone ;  
No least star gleamed,  
And trembling-still it seemed,  
As if the mountain held its breath  
For fear that it should weep ;  
A stopped stream smelled of Death ;  
The moon was out, blown by God's breath  
asleep ;  
The heavens turned  
Plunging and livid, choked with thunder-  
spume,  
Black driven clouds beneath whose eyelids  
burned  
A dreadful light, rushed forward in the gloom ;

There was no wind, but something seemed to  
stir

In the thin grass, as if unquiet head  
On sleepless pillow moved—a listener  
To hideous word unsaid ; until at last  
The narrow track was passed.

Below us empty and wide  
The world was flung ; the hill-top shivered  
bare,

While fretful lightning dug a vicious spear  
Into her sweating side  
As she flinched, blind and stark . . .  
A thin hail ravened against the door of dark.

Against His feet I trembled, but no word  
Of peace or pity heard ;  
The darkness shook as a dry leaf about,  
The world seemed to go out  
With a great groan along the sea . . .

Silence . . . then words to me . . .

" Child, what is it thou fear'st ? "

I stared up : Oh, strange words that did implore ! . . .

His brow was no more wounded, and no more  
Were the hands, still outstretched towards me,  
pierced.

" Lord, with this vision art thou tempting  
me,

To show how poor a thing my worship is ?

Yet oh, be Christ, be Christ ! I have for Thee  
Forsaken all my loved, my lovely ones,

As a wild stream breaks from maternal hill,

Escaping the sweet fingers of the sedge

Whose stinging hair doth all his bosom fill,

Listens to some great voice far off, and runs

To find the sea, the calling, crying sea . . .

I ran to Thee ! "

Then I heard human accents answering :

“ I am a god, made god by all thy prayers ;

Each stone becomes a god by worshipping ;

I am a man who loves thee : in thy town

Many have loved thee, I am one of these.”

At those few words of horror Faith fell down,

Yet scarcely understood such blasphemies ;

“ What didst thou need ? ” I wept, still at his  
feet ;

“ Thyself, thou lovely thing ! ”

“ Dost thou yet love me as Christ loves albeit  
Thou art not He—some message thou dost  
bring ? ”

“ Nay, but I love thee as a night of Spring !

I saw thee dance to-night at Carnival,

I saw thee laugh and spurn thy lovers all,

And dreamed, ‘ No man’s desire she will heed,

Her lips are oversworn and over-kissed,

But she will surely list

If God but seem to speak, will list indeed.

I will not weave, as other lovers weave,

Her garlands, she shall find, and grieve

For the one last thorn found tangled in my  
hair ;

She shall forsake the world, she shall forswear,

Gather the honey of her being sweet

Into a vase of prayer

To break here at my feet.'

Since at the Carnival all men may wear

What guise they will, I chose the holiest ;

Yea, when thy voice persuaded : ' Turn again '

I dreamed to woo thee—not as other men—

What faith hadst thou in any reveller ?

It seemed thy soul was brimmed for God to  
stir.

Delight was impotent, and joy was old.

Of Christ I made a travesty of sin,

Thy loveliness to win—

To run my miser fingers through the gold,

The shuddering sweetness of thy rebel hair,

To sense the conflict of refusing lips,

The slow surrender from thy finger tips

Till thou wert all mine, utterly possessed,

Mine as the Moon

Is captive on the night's triumphant breast,

Mine as May's burning bowl is full of June ! "

I shrank away, the thin words fell like blood

From my torn lips, I shuddered where I stood,

Muttering : " Christ may come in stranger's  
guise

To poor men's houses, may go humbly shod,

Begging for broken meats, nor shall despise

Those who give thus, knowing the cloak hides  
God.

But I and all my soul are sacrificed  
To a thief that hath put on the garb of Christ.  
Oh, at sin's feet to break my spirit's vase !  
Oh, that I dreamed to lie upon His breast  
While over me He brake the bread and  
blessed ;—  
To feel the mighty stars  
Streaming to meet me ; to have compassed all,  
Reached, overtaken, passed, Eternity,  
In one hour's glory, then to fall  
To Hell, at last with thee !  
Ah God, that Thou couldst let such horror be,  
Couldst let that veritable image HE—  
Travesty of Thy Son,  
Tear my weak soul in tatters, yea, that Thou  
Couldst lead Sin by Thy hand and by Thy  
brow  
To Thy poor foolish helpless little one ! ”



Then horror laid her hands on me,—I fled :  
It seemed the world-end could not be too far  
For such a fugitive,  
Nor ramparts of the outer darkness give  
Shelter for such a head.

The hideous night, with lips of a lazar,  
With a shrill scream pursued,  
Till Dawn in seamless sky a tatter rent  
That oozed long lines of blood,  
Smearing the grey breast of the firmament . . .  
The whole world closed upon me, o'er my face  
Flinging an inescapable black hood.

As one half-drowned may feel above his head  
(After all sense of dread,  
And desperate fight for breath have died away),  
The heavy waters part, and sound and space  
And cold sky stare about him, which make melt  
Green water-worlds into familiar day,

The light came groping to me, and I felt  
The morning on my brow, while over me  
An unaccustomed face leaned patiently,  
Until it grew to be

The beggar I had scorned at Carnival.

“ O Child,” the voice of pity spake : “ for all  
Thy faith, Christ was not in those hands—that  
brow.”

“ Nay, a thief took my soul, but comest  
thou

Beggar, to taunt me, as I taunted thee ? ”

“ I come to none to chide or spurn :

I come to plead with thee that thou return

To thy forsaken Christ, rebellious one.

God long hath sat beside thee in the sun,

Thou knowing not.” I said : “ If thou be He,

Trouble me not, I have nought left to give ;

I am drained utterly

Of faith and worship. Can these dead bones  
live ?

What rose shall spread wing from this stricken  
tree ?

All, all is waste and scattered to the wind,  
All, all is dead and strangled in the dust !  
And no dew lies

In the dead Morning's eyes ;  
The sheeted Moon, unsepulchred, is thrust  
On the bare Night, another tomb to find !  
Earth, heaven, have passed away."

" These are built up again." " But not for  
me."

He answered : " Yea,  
Even for such as thou ; oh, seek and find !  
Go back, thou hast two children in thy house ;  
Breaking thy holy vows,  
Didst think to find thy God in mummeries,

Finding it not with whom Christ said : ' Of  
these '

A child is, but a shell upon Life's shore,  
Fragile, rose-kissed, yet holding for thine ears  
Raging of seas, and roaring of the spheres.  
Thou hadst no need too heavenward to look up,  
Thou discontented soul.

Behold Christ's milky mouth in the china cup,  
Christ's hand that tips the blue-rimmed por-  
ridge bowl ! "

" Ah, Lord, can such as I return  
To the grey paths of peace—re-live, re-learn ?  
How can I feel my children's hands like  
flowers

About my face ? Assign me grimmer hours,  
Not the familiar stair, the to and fro  
Of duties slow,  
The little, dreadful paths of every day ! "

“ Am I not broken in the commonest bread,  
And spilled in the unconsecrated wine ?

Is not each man who loves, a priest,  
Albeit men lock Me in a sunless shrine,  
Spreading a special feast ?

Yet am I outside in the lilac-tree,  
Beneath their feet, around them everywhere.  
Thou canst not chain Christ to a chapel-bell.  
From brothels thinkest thou I hear no prayer ?  
Doth not the choking gutter sing Me well ?

Is not the whole sweet world my Sanctuary ?  
Do they despise My feet, who do but lave  
The feet of strangers, in their bosoms nursed ?  
Am I not fed on orphans' lips, My thirst  
Quenched in the beggar's platter ? They who  
save

One shipwrecked soul, or seek some heart  
forgot,

Are Mine and love Me, though they know it  
not.

They are too noble for escape of Me :  
Their lives more sing Me than a thousand

They thrust aside My Everlasting Arms,  
Yet they are still beneath them—they and  
thee.

“ What need hast thou of vows ?  
Go back ; thou hast two children in thy house.”

I went by wood and waste toward the town :  
The whole world lay, a quiet emerald  
Set in a golden ring  
Upon God's finger, against His bosom thrall'd ;  
Elusive airs were blown  
On elfin horns of Spring ;  
Through the thin mist pale hawthorn trees  
peered out

Like a dim, sick face from its frilled cap  
Upon infirmary pillow, turned about—  
Caught creature in some vast, predestined trap.  
But with each step I took, the morning grew  
Gayer and younger, a full-throated thrush  
Woke, and from hidden bush  
Dimpled a note or two,  
Set the wood's side a-shake, as if it knew  
Answer to impudent jest ; already bees  
Sought the dell's bosom all a-heave with blue,  
And girdled with the goldenest primroses.  
From every fold  
The young lambs' cough came softly down the  
lane ;  
The cuckoo told  
His first few notes—as miser tells his gold,  
And counted them again.  
I passed along the unchanged, quiet street.

At my own door unlatched I entered in ,  
Upon an atmosphere that seemed too sweet  
For me and all my sin.

I felt no agony of hope or loss,  
Treading the old paths that beside me lay ;  
For me no one great lifting on the Cross,  
But small, slow crucifixions every day.  
I brought no prayers, I made no conscious  
vows,  
And though it seemed God never could confer  
Duty so simple, such a humble faith,  
And that no further life my soul could stir,  
I went back, meekly, trusting what He saith :  
“ Go back, thou hast two children in thy  
house.”



TO A POET, CHARLES BRIDGES

THOU singest, thou, meseems,  
Coming from high Parnassus ; where thy  
head

Beside the silent streams,  
Among fast-fading blooms, hath fashionèd  
A pillow of pale dreams ;  
While from thee, sleeping, gods, of heart and  
soul,

Have taken fullest toll.

Thou knowest at what cost  
Thy sleep was taken on those awful hills—  
What thou hast gained, and lost ;  
Thou knowest, too, if what thou art fulfils  
The pledge of what thou wast ;

And if all compensates the poet's wreath  
That wounds the brow beneath.

Rememberest thou that night  
Incomparable? Thou in dreams wast laid,  
Where petals, rose and white,  
Above thy head a pale pavilion made;  
Where at unscaled height  
The moon lay anchored in the heaving  
sky,  
And clouds went surging by.

Then came the gods unknown!—  
The plundering gods—to take thee unawares,  
While thou wast sleeping, thrown  
Upon the sacred mountain that is theirs.  
In vain sad flowers had blown  
A gale of petals o'er thee, on they came  
In a still sheet of flame!

They knew that those who dare  
To sleep one night beside Parnassus' streams  
The poet's crown must wear—  
Must lip the chalice of immortal dreams,  
And breathe the eternal air ;  
Who, even unto trembling Ossa's hill,  
May walk the mount at will !

They killed thy happiness,  
And strangled all thy youth, with hands profane,  
They brake Love's rosaries,  
Tossing thy ravaged soul amid the slain,  
While thou wast weaponless ;  
And left thee gibbeted 'twixt pain and peace,  
Forbidding thy release.

Then they augustly laid  
Their crippled gifts beside thee, and withdrew

Into high Pelion's shade ;  
Their tireless feet made fall no bead of dew,  
Their passing bent no blade,  
Though thunder muttered round each mighty  
plume,  
And crumbled into gloom.

They laid a fatal spell  
Of beauty on thine eyes, that made most fair  
The rose unpluckable ;  
They bade thee thirst, yet find no Cup to bear  
Water from any well ;  
They mocked thee with a vision passionate,  
And a soul celibate !

O friend, what thou hast known  
Thou givest me ; what thou hast suffered, thou  
Wouldst calmly bear alone ;  
Forbidding thorns to gather on my brow,—

Accustomed on thine own ;  
 Thou lingerest at my side, to show and spare  
 The pitfall and the snare.

For thou wouldst give to me  
 The poet's pillow, who has suffered not  
 The poet's penalty ;  
 A goodly heritage, a happy lot  
 Wouldst have my portion be.  
 With honey from the rod art fain to feed,  
 Not from the gallèd reed.

Thou hast some rare reward !  
 The reed that gods have guided, in thine hand  
 Becomes a dreadful sword ;  
 Their fingers on thy heartstrings still demand  
 A loud, triumphant chord :  
 They pass the ditch-delivered poets by,  
 With wide contemptuous eye.

Poet, I take thy Cup :

But, from my coloured wreath of morning  
flowers

Where bees wild honey sup,

Upon thy sepulchre of buried hours

Am fain to offer up

Some bud, that spills upon thy brow anew

Its fragile shell of dew.

And if at last I choose

To make my pillow on some slope forlorn,

And my crown of flowers lose

My morning wreath, that must be tossed and

lost

To the jealous Muse,

Remember the poor gifts that I resign . . .

I shall remember thine !

## AVE ET VALE

FAREWELL is said ! Yea, but I cannot take

All that my Greeting gave.

In you hath Hope her doom and Joy her  
grave ;

Still you go crowned with old imaginings,  
Clad in the purple that young passion flings  
About the sorriest god that Love can make.

Ah ! would you might forget, and so pass by

Unwounded of my kiss,

Made free of Youth's unmemorable bliss !

Love's hand that speeds along his daisy  
chain

Forgets in swift delight to tell again

Old prayers upon a new-strung rosary.

For when I part from you I would not leave

One shadow that might be

A ghost to haunt you, what you had of me

I would fold by in Memory's lavender—

Something my breath may very gently stir

In the slow fading of a rainy eve.

When you drop cherries in the purple wine

For other lips to drain,

Let not old nights betrayed leap up again,

Throw down no murdering chalice at your  
feast

To-night, nor find another woman's breast

Less lovely with the sudden dream of mine.

Yet if a stranger bear my name, or one

With the same-coloured eyes

Glance at you suddenly, lost dreams shall rise

With unintelligible swift appeals,



The broken images of old ideals  
Shall stare from corners where as gods they  
shone.

Farewell is on the lips of the first kiss  
But speaks no word until  
The loud voice of Desire hath had its will.  
Greeting is swift and beautiful, Farewell  
Is slow and patient and immutable,  
Knowing of old that love must lead to this.

Greeting ! Farewell ! The day's grown very old,  
My heart put out the light,  
Read no more pages of the Past to-night.  
There are no roses here to miss the sun ;  
A soul hath looked on love and he hath flown ;  
Ashes are on the wind ; the tale is told.

## THE CHALICE OF CIRCE

“ DRINK of our Cup—of the red wine that burns  
in it,

All the wild shames that have crusted its  
mouth,

Passion that twists in it, Madness that churns  
in it,

Fever that yearns in it, Folly that turns in it,  
Drink of our Cup! It is Love, it is Youth!

“ Amorous valleys have travailed to breed  
in it,

Eden hath shaken one tree at its brim,

Syria scattered an infamous seed in it,

Paphos hath freed in it lovers, to bleed in it,

Foam from Armida hath rusted its rim !”

Chalice of gold with the bruised roses dying  
there,

How the mad kisses have clustered and  
clung !

All the sweet loves of the world, softly crying  
there,

Longing and lying there, swooning and sighing  
there,

Call to me : " Scatter our wine on thy tongue ! "

Rim of it, poisoned with carrion kisses,  
Taints the fresh flower, and forbiddeth the sun :  
Doves never brood where the stirred serpent  
hisses

At maddening kisses—mysterious blisses :  
Over its edges the spiders have spun.

Fierce wife of Philip her portion hath found  
in it,

Messaline waits there, Aspasia woos :

Helen and Egypt go vested and crowned in it,  
Phryne is bound in it, Faustine swings round  
in it,

Crying : " Come down to us, watch us and  
choose ! "

Voices are calling : " The revel begin with us,  
Run thou again in the race of delight !  
All the sweet chase and the capturing win with  
us,

Enter thou in with us, gambol and sin with us,  
Fleet is the quarry and far is the flight ! "

Ere I could slake at the chalice's wonder  
Lips all a-fire for the taste of such bliss,  
Rose a great storm, sucked the white faces  
under,  
And tore them asunder with fury and  
thunder,

Crushed the last folly and choked the last kiss.

Fiercely it flung them and savagely shattered  
them,

Burst the last breath in a bubble of blood !

Fury and foam of it broke them and battered  
them,

Scorched them and scattered them, tortured  
and tattered them,

Hurling their limbs in the froth of the flood.

. . . . .

Perished their promise, their beauty forsaken ;

Silence alone walked the face of the deep :

The whirlpool was stilled, and the surface with  
snaken

Small ripples was shaken, as if did awaken

Some sorrowful ghost from the margin of  
sleep.

Nothing was left of their beauty and 'plaining—

Left their magic and spared of their spell :

Only the lip of the dark water, staining  
The roses, fast waning ; and only the craning  
Of snakes' heads, disturbed by the petals that  
fell.

## TO THE OLD GODS

To F. D. G.

Who inspired much that is in this book.

O YE, who rode the gales of Sicily,  
Sandalled with flame,  
Spread on the pirate winds ; O ye, who broke  
No wind-flower as ye came—  
Though Pelion shivered when the thunder spoke  
The gods' decree !—  
  
Into the twilight of the ancient days  
Have not ye flown !—  
Ye, whom the happy Greeks' inspirèd hand  
Struck from the frenzied stone :  
That, ye withdrawn, your images should  
stand  
To take their praise.

Smeared into clay, and frozen into stone !

Ye, that do now

Face eyes unworshipful in plunder's halls,

Mutilate, with marred brow :

Broken and maimed : couched along alien  
walls

In lands unknown.

O gracious ones ! No more, no more, shall ye

Spread wing above

Perilous Ossa ! No more wring delight

From pool and golden grove :

No more beneath your fire-shod feet in flight

Shall hiss the sea.

The thunder shall not groan between your  
breasts,

Nor lightning writhe

Barbed in your clutch ; no worshippers shall  
trace



Your steps in grove and hithe.

No more 'thwart skies your golden stallions  
race

On mighty quests.

And yet what fane, what column, rises now  
To save or shine :

What temple travails at such quickening feet,

What wing-tip seeds a shrine :

What god hath bid us build in wold or street,  
Such breast and brow ?

What have our wisdom and our worship done  
To raise such gods ?

To quench the ruined eyes of Parthenon

What newer beauty nods,

And shames the wreckless brow that stares  
upon

The amazed sun ?

Held up in arms of columns white as flowers,  
You faced the sea,  
With your great breasts for glory passioning,—  
For mortal's victory ;  
Not 'neath occasional thin spires that spring  
From streets of ours,

Hooding the dying god, whom men revile,—  
Who bears their sin.

No great winds thunder over sun-splashed  
          thrones,

Our dusty shrines within,

Where troubled feet make groan the weary  
          stones,

In hollow aisle.

I, only I, kneel at forsaken shrine :

The lamp I bring

Scarce throws a shade beneath your eyelids  
          there ;

Forlorn the song I sing  
To ears august, and these wrung berries bear  
A bitter wine.

Yet still I kneel, poor praise to offer up  
To each great name !  
And I shall feel upon my brow descend  
A sudden edge of flame.  
Your wings shall smear these words, even as ye  
    bend  
To this poor cup.

## THE DEAD MOMENT

THE world is changed between us, never  
more

Shall the dawn rise and seek another mate  
Over the hill-tops ; never can the shore  
Spread out her ragged tresses to the roar  
Of the sea passionate,  
Moon-chained, and for a season love-forbid ;  
Never shall shift the sullen thunder's lid  
At lightning-lash, and never shall the night  
Throw the wild stars about,  
Nor the day flicker out  
Against the evening's breath ; but this shall  
creep—

This moment on us, to make different

The face of every day's intent,  
And change the brow of sleep.

What can we name it? Oh, the whitest  
word

Would leave a stain upon that moment's  
mouth !

The sweetest piping heard

By wearying birds a-South

Would shake its silence, let no word be said ;

What need of name or music hath the dead ?

Too far for call, too faint for song it is,

This ghost of ours, that you have buried  
deep ;

Less earth than any violet nourishes

Its fragile stem would keep ;

And we could lose it in the frailest shell,

Or lily's wannest bell ;

In any rose's urn that dust might dwell.

Oh ! to forsake it thus,  
Our only one, our starveling piteous !  
Even as men who garner and lock up  
Gold chasuble and cup,—  
Their alabaster and their tourmaline,—  
Their sandal-wood and wine,  
Will give their dearest to the earth to keep,  
Housed among strangers, and will let the clay  
Or oozing river-bed  
Rot all their wealth away,  
While they go home to sleep !  
Will let the wild roots of the bramble clutch,  
And see the careless sod  
Trample it down, and bruise with common  
touch  
All that they knew of glory and of God !  
  
(Who would not house a thief so house their  
dead !)

In the blind dark with wolf-winds overhead.  
When night sucks honey from the hive of day  
They lie, while April, with her merry clout,  
Flings the white dust about ;  
When the swift silences that ride the Spring  
Whip on their misty chariots, and wring  
Foam from the bridled lips of May ;  
What time the sick moon looks up yellowly  
Out of the pillowed sky,  
Or when doth sing  
Some crazy bird, aslant upon a bough  
A song that makes him, just this time of year,  
A poet, and can never sing again ;  
When the pale lips of rain  
Tremble above the eyelids of the plain.  
Ah ! would you hide our one dead moment,  
now,  
Even as they, my dear ?

Who into one grave huddle grace<sup>\*</sup> and mirth,  
Beating down Beauty with a noisy spade,  
Nor dream that 'neath the stunned and sense-  
less earth

Are all their riches laid ;—  
Such gold as they shall never see again,  
Such wine as shall not stain  
Their shallow cups ! All beauty, all delight,  
Treasure, unbarterable and bright,  
All lie there in the cold, and in the night.

Nay, you will have it so ?  
Let all its sweetness go,  
Brief, exquisite ?  
Then take it hence ; but make a wreath for it  
And let us sing for it a requiem,  
Not the few strangled words above the dead  
That those, whose hearts condemn,  
Mutter, for having left so long unsaid,



Pity or praise, to ears desiring them.

Bury it not as something sick and shamed,

Unfathered and unnamed.

Nay, break sweet spices, myrrh and cedar  
bring,

Bury it as a king,

Or some belovèd child that lies beneath

The rose whose name he knew not, wondering

Why his young mother wove it in a wreath.

For, look you, and remember what it gave,—

Those gifts, that naught and none can take  
away !

How it makes red as rose each <sup>\*</sup>pallid day,

Each coward moment, brave ;

And how each wingless heel of Misery

It sandals with a hope, and sends a-sky !

While we await the hour that somewhere  
goes

Unmatched, unmated . . . it shall not be  
yet:

Night's heavy eyelids close

On tears ; and leave the Morning's pillow wet.

Weep not, though said the requiem, flung the  
wreath ;

Only when you forget, and I forget,

Weep for that moment's death.

## TO A GIPSY

ONCE when some sudden thought of you  
beseeches,

Swift as a homing bird

I shall come down with Love's young song that  
reaches

And whispers to the silence Sorrow teaches

One sweet and April word.—

To where Wind's whitest hand invisible,

Stroking the mountain's side

To silver, breaks in edge of froth each  
bell

As waves against the tide

Till a soft fringe of flowers frays on bare  
beaches.

—To where the blasted tree lies burst asunder  
By hideous lightning's breath,  
And in its track hears growl the wolf of  
thunder  
Who follows with wide jaws a-gape for plunder  
Along the path of death.  
Where every sloe-tree writhles, sideways  
struck,  
Crippled, and dumb, and torn,  
And hell-black berries only gnomes would  
suck,  
Gape on the twisted thorn  
That the moor bears in shame, recoiling under:  
I greet you there—there where the great winds  
greet you !  
And they shall bring and bear  
My spirit to you, though they blind and beat  
you,

And scream away, of this they shall not cheat  
you,

My hand is in their hair ;

Where the rough heather gnaws the rattling stones

Where quarry soil has slipped,

And flings unshrouded to the day the bones  
Of dead trees, from their crypt ;

There, gipsy, in your palace, I will meet you.

Out in the blare of great wind-bitten spaces,

Where from the distant shore

Fugitive foam is flung against our faces,

While on her heel the tempest raves and races,

There we shall meet once more !—

Where the sky's red is under-staunched  
with grey,

And sunset's livid eye

Rolls in sick film of blood to see the Day

Flash up the darkened sky,—  
Young Victor, with drawn sword, upon his  
traces !

Then I shall have no need of song to sing you,—

No word to speak that day,

My laugh the spirit of the wild shall fling  
you,

My kiss the fresh lips of the gale shall bring  
you,

The stream my name shall say.

As, from the ditch, some hedge-wraith  
dartling out,

Shall prick the horse's ear,

Your heart, astir, whose word you shall  
not doubt,

Shall whisper I am near,

And with the old sweet tang of tears shall sting  
you.

Among the lanes that love—the hills that  
know you,

There I shall seek and find ;

Across the long, blue fields at dawn, that show  
you

Their dream-dishevelled brows, the trees that  
throw you

Their last leaves down the wind.

And you shall look up from a dream half-  
sad,

A memory half-sweet,

Find hand in yours, and finding, shall grow  
glad

Of feet beside your feet,

See grey sky blue, and stubble flower below  
you.

Then, Gipsy, then, no asking and no taking  
In that immortal hour

All has been asked and given ; the cross for-  
saking

Crowned Love ascending is, and young bud  
breaking

Into one heaven, one flower.

And we shall face the morning, take the sun

In vetch and bracken root,

And build our fire, pitch tent when day is  
flown

Like any dusty-foot,

And find clear sky above us at our waking.

Gipsy, if we, among these grasses lying,

Could find and hold the best,—

Could wander, you and I, the world  
defying,

Where, on Night's silence falls the day's speech,  
sighing

Against the woodland's breast ;



Then life should wander happy, fearless,  
free,

And unto both of us

A flowering, not a Crucifixion be ;

Oh ! once to dare and thus

Live !—and when dying, know not it was dying !

## AT A LIFE'S END

COME here, rekindle the old fire,  
This last night leave no lamp unlit !  
In later days we twain shall sit,  
Remembering the joys of it,—  
The warmth and sweetness of desire.

Here, ere we part, again live o'er  
The way we went,—the hour,—the kiss ;  
Let Love with magic hand of his  
Rebuild the mirage of our bliss  
In desert days that wend before.

Swart night of August ! when we stood  
Heart-locked beside the window-pane !  
The thunder quickening again

The laggard pulses of the rain,  
Wrung a few drops as hot as blood.

Outside we heard the passionate tune  
That wooing wind and water keep ;  
The weft that silence weaves with sleep ;  
While through the foam-blown silent deep  
Sailed the wan shallop of the moon.

Outside, the dark night and the sea !  
The sleepy and seductive speech  
Of water to the shrinking beach,  
The wind that odoured plum and peach,  
The white rose that regaled a bee.

Joy through our hands like water runs !  
Ah ! dearest, could we keep those hours  
As some divine unfading flowers,  
Renewed by the eternal showers,  
And lit by everlasting suns !

But flowers and hours alike must fade ;  
In the old book of Memory  
Seal up these hours for you and me,  
As on some page of poetry,  
At glowing words a rose is laid.

Let the grape purple in the South,  
And let the wild red daisies blow !  
I shall not see, I shall not know ;  
For me, alone the darnels grow,  
Only the hemlocks bruise my mouth.

To-night the world is stunned with gloom,  
The trees shake in a sudden fright,  
Wincing against the hailstones' spite,  
And the crape curtains of the night  
Hang heavy on the unfinished loom.

Fit hour for parting ! Say ' farewell,'

Clasp me no closer, ask no more !  
What word can ease—what kiss restore ?  
The thunder's hearse is on the shore,  
And the sea tolls a passing bell.

## IN PRAISE OF MANDRAGORA

O, MANDRAGORA, many sing in praise

Of life, and death, and immortality,—

Of passion, that goes famished all her days,—

Of Faith, or fantasy ;

Thou, all unpraised, unsung, I make this rhyme  
to thee.

The womby underworlds thy roots enclose,

In human shape, sprung from abhorrent  
seed ;

But when through crumbling roof the daylight  
shows,

And thou thy breast hast freed

Thou growest in the field as any flower or weed.

At many a cross-road bare thy leaves protrude,

Upon the brow of lonely, moon-blanch'd  
heath,  
And from a loathly breast thou draggest food,  
That moulders far beneath . . .  
Whereon a crazy moon stares out and bares her  
teeth.

And sometimes, in the purblind face of morn  
The stealthy hinds slink out to gather thee,  
Then shudder, as thy shrieking roots are torn,  
And turn at last, and flee,  
Leaving a slimy pulp that bleedeth sullenly.

Ah !—well thou mayest shriek, for he who lies  
In clotted earth, with stones upon his  
breast,  
Feareth a victim who drags out his eyes  
In vengeance deadliest,  
While to thy loosened feet his screaming mouth  
is pressed !

O mystic one, thou hast a couch more  
dread

Than Isabella's Basil ever knew ;—  
Whose petals on a gentle brow were fed,  
Whose leaves in fragrance grew,  
That Death, in sorrowful amend, made sweet  
with dew.

O Mandragora, though thy features dwell  
Beneath the earth in such ill company,  
Far sweeter than that plant to Isabel,  
Thy blossoms are to me.  
Thou Root of dreamless sleep, take this in  
praise of thee !

Close thou Pandora's casket by whose aid  
That goddess Discord queens the escapèd  
woes,  
She had no power to hinder or dissuade,  
Yet Mandragora shows



A hope uncabined, and a peace that conquers  
those !

From thee Nepenthe doth her pitcher fill,  
That barters with the merchandise of  
grief,  
And for all suffering and every ill  
Hath such a sweet relief,  
That sleep the haven seems, and pain the voyage  
brief.

Thou thro' still gardens in the timorous Dusk,  
When all the sky is purpled with the pain  
Of dying Day, dost walk, and myrrh and  
musk

Fall from thy misty train,  
And totter all about, and are caught up again.

There the lulled world within the opiate blue  
Forgets her long-continued pain and falls  
Into an easy sleep ; the winds pursue

Each other round the walls ;  
A night-bird cries, then lists, then answers its  
own calls.

The moon exalts her yellow Lily-cup  
Above the rainy evening goldenly,  
The wan tent of her beauty foldeth up  
The frail Anemone,  
From whose white bosom spins the spent and  
tousled bee.

I would not proffer any highest god  
Praise for the poor gift of eternity.  
When sin has sucked the honey from its rod,  
And reason bows the knee,  
And Fame beats out her torch, what fire, what  
feast, for me ?

When Sense is numb, and Song forgets her  
chant,

80      IN PRAISE OF MANDRAGORA

And Beauty swells the ashes of the dead,  
And Love's denied white breast forgets to pant  
Beneath some lovely head.

What Life shall I desire when Love and Youth  
are fled ?

O Mandragora, when thy lips are laid  
On other paling lips, remember mine.

Beneath thy kiss all other kisses fade ;

Let Life herself resign

Her breath upon thy lip, her being unto  
thine.

Then all in vain may golden trump declare,  
No flickering lid shall Thracian music  
raise,

And Pan in vain shall pipe his cunning air  
In secret woodland ways.

My closed lips shall sing thy triumph and my  
praise.

❁  
O Mandragora, we have pledged our vows,

❁  
And I will spill for thee my cup of wine.

Though poets few have woven for thy brows

A coronet divine.

Give thy immortal gift—these verses shall be  
thine !

## THE END OF LOVE

Who shall forget till his last hour be come,—  
Until the useful service of the dust  
Hath drawn the emptying cerements in and  
in ;—

Until the Earth hath eaten love and lust,  
Mirth, Beauty, and their kin . . .  
Who shall forget that hour  
That night unstarred, that day ungarlanded ;  
Where fell the petals of that fadeless flower ?

When every word was said  
That long had bared frustrate and savage teeth,  
Leashed in the perishable thong of days,  
And whipped to words of praise !  
When every ill, and each ingratitude,

Each joy misnamed,  
Each deed misunderstood,  
Was flogged into the daylight, halt and  
maimed,  
Out of its bier, to bear the day's disgust—  
Out of its decent bed  
To beat Love's tortured head  
Into the troubled and uncertain dust.  
Who can forget that naked hour profane,  
When Love fled from us, shrieking through the  
dark,  
His torch blown backward by the hurricane  
Licking his dreadful features with its tongue,  
While his mouth spat a curse at every spark,  
And a scourged menace flung ?

Thou wert that dreadful thing !  
O Beautiful, O Rare, O Breath of rose,  
O Spirit, as impalpable as Spring !

How have I held thee, then ? Too long, too  
close ?

For it was thou, was thou, who left me thus,  
With each sweet thing, with all the lovely host  
That turning stared at us,  
\* And, shuddering, gave up their frailest ghost !

Oh ! to remember ! Oh ! to hear the tune  
That Love first sang to us, that happy day ;  
When over us was furled his radiant wing.  
Oh ! for that one May moment. Not to lose  
Its greenest leaf, or miss its singlest spray  
So that this hour by that forgotten day  
Might be all buried by the buds of Spring  
That soft winds beat,—not bruise,—  
To make a bridal bed for June  
From the pale shroud of May.  
O Love, O Love ! There was not any need  
For thee to die, for me to be bereft, —



Our garden to be left<sup>a</sup>  
To nettle and to weed,—  
To whips of rain when the chid wind was wroth.  
Surely some word, some sigh, had saved us  
both ?  
Could everything be lost,  
All torn and tossed  
Between thy speech and mine ? Could all our  
vows,  
And all our lovely life be laid so low,  
And God fall on His face within the house  
At first marauder's blow ?  
Yea, it was so :  
And all of pride and pleasure, peace and power,  
All Life's rich fruit and flower,  
Died, as least darnel dies, in that dread hour.



## WILD GEESE ACROSS THE MOON

REEDS, snake-like, coiled in the mist

Where the low fog drives :

The muddy cough of the stream that  
strives

To free its throat from the clot of reed,

As they fight it out—the water and  
weed—

While the fog, above, takes turn and  
twist :

Men, these are your lives !

Wild Geese across the moon :

As some hand that unrolls

And scratches black names upon blood red  
scrolls ;

So seem their shadows, dipping, dying,  
Black shapes on the red moon, screaming, flying,  
Till the fog blots out, or late or soon :  
Men, these are your souls !

## FORGIVENESS

ASK not my pardon ! For if one hath need  
Once to forgive the god that he hath raised,  
No further creed  
Can that god give ; but 'neath the soul who  
praised  
Lies bruised like a reed.

Let your dark plume, in passing leave a  
stain  
On my plume's whiteness : call your bitter,  
sweet :  
Give plague, or pain :  
But cringe not, fallen and fawning at my  
feet,  
By that to rise again.

No ! go your wild mad way, and seem at least  
The god you were . . . assume your aureole :  
Make me no priest  
To wash hands in the waters of your soul,  
Before I go to feast !

## THE BELLMAN

### *Rondel*

BRING out your dead before you reap  
From lips beloved infection dread ;  
Above such brows ye dare not weep !

Bring out your dead

Into the street from breast or bed,  
Lest ye too sicken into sleep  
That recks not of the Bellman's tread.

*Thrice foolish heart ! Why do you heap  
Corpse upon corpse—conspire to spread  
Corruption on all else you keep ?*

*Bring out your dead !*

*28a*

## SONNETS

### NOW

TAKE as you will, slake, solace, and possess,  
While Youth, with laughter, scatters tears that  
fall

Sudden and shaken sometimes at your call ;  
Pledge me in passion and in gentleness,—  
In praise and prayer, I would not give you  
less,

Be less unconquerably true in all,  
Take my young kisses,—my young spirit's  
thrall,

Forbid not Now's imperishable " Yes " !

When I am old, and cold and wise, and grown  
As far beyond as you outstrip me now,—

Nor plead, nor pant, nor challenge nor protest ;

Oh, come not then, all these years less your  
own ;

Too old to love, too wise to heed your vow,

Too cold to feel your cold hand on my breast.

## CHANGE

CHANGE shall accustom me in after years  
To kingdoms builded on Life's overthrow ;  
Onward with other poets I shall go,  
Unpraised of thee, though praised of all my  
    peers,  
Until the vine that thou hast quickened,  
    bears  
Its fruit in others' hands ; until I grow  
So different from myself I shall not know  
This poor young desperate heart, nor these wild  
    tears.

But though I change, thou shalt not change  
    with me,  
Thy shrine shall stand unaltered and unmoved,



And if we meet again I shall but see \*  
The features of a stranger, thou wilt be  
Wholly what once thou wert to me, Beloved  
And not what time and men have made of thee

## POSSESSION

Most blessèd one, how can I let thee go ?  
Canst thou forswear the nightingale its tune—  
Stay the young sea from following his moon—  
Bid hyacinth put out her blue light ? Oh,  
Thou art not mine but Me ! and being so  
How canst thou bid my year stop short of June,  
Or hold my feet from following thine so soon,  
Or bid me build on Heaven's overthrow ?

Nay, how can I put off thy presence ? Where  
Should my soul serve without thy sanctities ?  
I kneel beside thee, I, who am a child  
In thy man's hand, cling to thee spent and wild  
Until my face is hidden in my hair,  
And I fall, weeping, weeping, at thy knees !

## AFTER

WHEN, on an empty night in later years  
Thou ponderest over sorrowful sweet things,  
While troubling with cold hands the muted  
strings  
Of Memory's lute now silent in thine ears,  
These words shall sweep with soft descent of  
tears—  
Shall wound the air with thrust of sudden  
wings  
Bringing the Past to thee as Winter brings  
To naked boughs the colour April wears.  
Thou shalt read' over, in less fortunate days,  
Forgotten pages till thy heart be moved  
To sudden pity and to passionate praise  
Of what thou didst not heed nor understand ;

Letting the book drop from thy trembling  
hand,

“ Once,” thou shalt say and pause . . . “ How  
I was loved ! ”

## THE BALCONY

A STREET at night, a silent square

That mirth forbids ;

Whose windows, with drawn lips and narrowed  
lids,

Resent the intruder's stare.

Where winds are cautious in their play,

Where only steals

Some meagre brougham on its muffled wheels  
Before the portals grey.

But suddenly a window swings,

A hand is laid

For one white moment on the balustrade,

And benediction brings.

I linger . . . but, O influence malign

I watch a snail

Crawl casually along the painted rail,

Where I had built a shrine !

## TINTAGEL

DEAD man ! will you ride with me,  
As you rode that night of yore,  
Will you ride with me, once more  
To Tintagel by the sea ?

When those savage words were said—  
Words that challenged destiny—  
To Tintagel by the sea,  
Through the sweating night we fled !

Hearts, that raged with storm and sea,  
Thundered through the scream of  
rain ;  
Laugh and ride with me again,  
Take my kisses thirstily !

Clutch the cloak that flies apart,

Grip the stallion with your knee :

Let my wild, black tresses be

Once more pinioned on your heart.

Dream is dead, and dead are we .

But the dead rise up again !

Once more through the night and rain

Dead man ! will you ride with me ?



## THE FOOLS

Below, the street was hoarse with cries,  
With groan of carts and scuffling feet,  
With laughter worse than blasphemies,  
Was choked with dust, and blind with heat.

    This room was still—too still for peace.

It heard the livid words we said  
Of hate and passion, watched us where  
I sat as one beside the dead—  
You lay with all your glorious hair  
    Flung o'er the crazy bed.

The moment's passion ended brought—  
Ah ! child, to you what did it bring ?  
What could it, but one hideous thought,

To us so tired of everything,  
And hating what we sought ;  
—So tired of all this grey room meant,—  
Of life together, shackled cold,  
Or bound in flame so different  
From the swift white desire of old—  
The old divine consent.

Poor room, so meanly intimate !  
Our dirty clothes sprawled on a chair,  
Combs, candle-end and grimy plate  
Littered the table, paper and hair,  
Forlornly choked the grate.

Yes, I so passionate, you such  
A wild sweet plunderer of bliss,  
Soon fallen in our own folly's clutch,  
Finding how wrong, how mad it is  
To know, to love, too much !

You rose, but with no woman's care  
For all the beauty that is hers,  
Pent up your out-burst storm of hair  
And fetched your cloak and found your  
    purse  
And matched my sullen stare.

Wild words so often said before  
Escaped us in the old fierce way ;  
You cried : ' I shall return no more ' ;  
I said : ' I shall no longer stay ' ;  
    You closed the grumbling door.

The mirror grinned : ' They still are one,'  
The cupboard gasped : ' Their clothes are  
    here,'  
The blind said : ' Wait till night comes on !'  
The ghastly bed said with a leer :  
    ' I shall not sleep alone !'

They knew what took us years to learn,  
That Habit terrible and slow  
Doth Love and Hate alike inurn ;  
They knew too well I should not go,  
They knew you would return

## À CHICOT

IN days of ancient history

Who were you ? Tell me if you know.

Between your kisses answer me

To-night, Chicot.

Were you a faun by Castaly

Tracking Urania or Clió ?

Or a white boy in Arcady

Astray, Chicot ?

Were you a satin-supple page

Swinging a curtain to and fro,

Chanting some impudent adage

Of love, Chicot ?

Were you the subtlest cardinal

That ever blessing did bestow ?

At Fontarabia did you fall,

Fighting, Chicot ?

Or at some monarch's table set,

Did the bells twink at wrist and toe ?

Were you Brusquet or Dagonet,

Or else Chicot ? .

Something you were of all of these,

Wise, gay, serene—that hid below,

More sad for all your subtleties,

Something, Chicot.

You brace your armour well to-night,—

Too well for any blood to flow ;

You'd not betray in any fight

A wound, Chicot !

I think you would not flinch beneath

Life's whips, but after every blow

Stand up again and set your teeth

And smile, Chicot

Weariness waits on wariness,

There's leaping flame beneath the snow-

All sorts of things that none would guess

Of you, Chicot !

Are you a lover ? No and yes !

Are you a comrade ? Yes and no !

What are you ? Neither more nor less

Than just Chicot !

Take what a passing poet sings

Before to-morrow bids us go,

In memory of—many things,

And you, Chicot !

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